

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 7089

By Massey

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Wallace "Dwight" Kessel, former Knox County Executive.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we should honor the memory of those citizens who, through their extraordinary efforts, distinguished themselves as public leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy individual is Wallace "Dwight" Kessel, former Knox County Executive and renowned public official, who had an active career in public service and was a friend to all who were blessed to know him; and

WHEREAS, the son of Wayne and Edith Kessel, Dwight Kessel was born in Dehue, West Virginia, and spent most of his childhood in Beckley, West Virginia; and

WHEREAS, he began his collegiate career at Duke University before transferring to the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland; he went on to serve the United States Navy during World War II; and

WHEREAS, following his military service, Dwight Kessel earned an industrial engineering degree from the University of Tennessee, where he was a proud member of the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kessel enjoyed a career in engineering for several years before launching a career in business as a purchasing agent for Chapman Wholesale Drugs, a family business; and

WHEREAS, in 1963, Dwight Kessel felt the call to serve his community as a member of the Knoxville City Council; he then served as a Knox County clerk in 1966; and

WHEREAS, he held several positions in local offices, culminating with his tenure as the first Knox County Executive in 1980, a position presently known as County Mayor; and

WHEREAS, highly regarded and sought after for his expertise, Mr. Kessel served on the boards of several local businesses and organizations, including the Boy Scouts of America, the Greater Knoxville Chamber of Commerce, the Girls Club, the Knox County Health Council, the Development Corporation of Knox County, the Juvenile Court Advisory Board, and the East Tennessee Foundation, among several others; and

WHEREAS, beyond his government service, Mr. Kessel helped create one of the nation's first internet companies, U.S. Internet; additionally, he converted the Farragut Hotel into office space and created the Chapman Drug Company, which eventually became a multistate chain; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kessel was a longtime member of First Baptist Church in Knoxville, where he served the church as a deacon and taught Sunday school for several years; and

WHEREAS, he was also a proud member of the Kiwanis Club for nearly seventy years; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Dwight Kessel was named an outstanding Industrial Engineer Alumni by the University of Tennessee, a most fitting honor that recognized his commitment and talent as an engineer; and

WHEREAS, Dwight Kessel was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, he will be sadly mourned but fondly remembered by his beloved wife of seventy-two years, Gloria Kessel; his children, Edgar (Jane Manning) Kessel and Karen Kessel (Jack) Nelson; his grandchildren, Matthew (Leigh) Avery and Kathryn (Spencer) Frantom; his great-grandchildren, Kess Avery, Hayes Avery, Field Avery, Hutch Avery, and Gray Frantom; and many special cousins, nieces, and nephews; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his parents, Mr. Kessel was preceded in death by his sister, Dorothy Calderwood; and

WHEREAS, Dwight Kessel leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we should remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public official and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Wallace "Dwight" Kessel, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we extend our condolences to the family of Mr. Kessel.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.